Keynote Address

Virginia High Speed Rail Development Committee

15 May 2002

Williamsburg, VA

Thank you Colin for that kind introduction, Jozay (Josee Covington) and Willard (Andrews) thank you for inviting me here, Senator Watkins, Delegate Rollison, Mayor Jeanne Zeidler, ladies and gentlemen. I would also like to introduce to you my expert on transportation in the region CDR Paul Van Hoosen, who is joining us today.

It is an honor for me to be with you today as we discuss our region's future and the potential impact high speed rail utilization may have on all of us.

I am encouraged about the prospects for rail as we conceptualize new and innovative transportation processes for people and cargo in the Hampton Roads area, this is clearly an area that needs to stay in focus as we approach the future.

You may be interested in the historical context from which we approach things concerning rail. The military was a heavy user of rail during and following World War II. We have rich, vivid black and white historical photos of the Naval Station Norfolk with railroad footprints, tracks on the pier, boxcars beside supply buildings, and even Virginia Railway & Power Company Streetcars on their way to the Naval Station. **The Norfolk and Western passenger station which became a Norfolk Southern Station before it closed in the 1970's was not far from the Naval Station.** Rail was once the primary method of transportation with hardly a truck dock in sight.

Then came improvements to vehicles and roadways combined with the development of the interstate highway system, which dramatically reduced the time and distance for over-the-road vehicles. Navy rail usage declined to the point that the rail infrastructure on the Naval Station was removed in the 1990's. While our use of rail has decreased, there are still opportunities today to use rail. If rail is needed for freight, our partnership with the Norfolk International Terminal is most valuable. In the event that we require rail for passenger movements, AMTRAK from Newport News is also available to support us.

I do believe there are even greater opportunities in the future.

The Hampton Roads area has begun to feel the effects of its 1.5 million residents in addition to the seasonal influx of tourists who are coming to see the wonderful historical attractions here in Williamsburg and Yorktown our cultural resources in Norfolk and Portsmouth, the Navy's own USS Wisconsin in downtown Norfolk, which hosted half a million visitors last year, the beautiful Virginia Beach resorts, and the countless other attractions to this great region. The Navy contributes up to 83,000 active duty commuters to the Hampton Roads highways, if you include reservists and our civilian work force, that total grows to more than 140,000 people. This does not count the ever-increasing number of contractors that work on our facilities, including the Navy Marine Corps Internet Network Operations Center, which alone employs more than 500 contractors. All of these people add to the traffic challenges in getting on base. The military presence also contributes at least 3,600 trucks a month on the interstate and city streets.

Obviously the events of September 11th have had a dramatic effect on everyone in our region, since then, installation security throughout the region has come into even bigger focus than it had before. In the days immediately following September 11th we increased our security posture and traffic ground to a near halt as we thoroughly searched every vehicle coming on our bases. There were delays up to three hours long. We will never compromise the security and safety of the people working on our installations, but these delays are a major concern.

While we have continued with our heightened security posture, we must continue to ensure that our people get to work on time. This sequence of events did put the transportation issue near the top of my priorities as the regional commander. We developed a task force called "Clear Gate" that was designed to examine ways to decrease the time our sailors spent waiting to get on base. While we have not seen the extremely lengthy wait times we experienced in September, it is still not uncommon for our sailors and civilian workers to wait 30 minutes to get on the base.

This a serious issue in terms of productivity and cost. For example if you just look at the situation at Naval Station Norfolk, assuming our military morning rush hour commuters are delayed by 30 minutes because of security screening, that's 3,300 man-hours per day lost to waiting in line while the car idles. Put another way, $22 million in lost productivity. This is without any traffic delays caused by accidents on the roadways.

We continue to try a variety of solutions to relieve traffic congestion, but getting that military or civilian commuter from their single occupancy vehicle or trucker off the road at peak traffic hours is a formidable challenge.

In addition to enhancing existing programs for increasing commuter ridership and uses of public transportation, one possible future solution is the use of light rail in Hampton Roads. While region wide high speed rail and light rail may be years down the road if we could just reduce the umber of cars to Naval Station Norfolk by 25% through using light rail and alternate forms of transportation, we could reduce the Volatile Organic Compounds emitted by 24 tons a year. Additionally, we could eliminate 3.75 tons of Nitrous Oxide.

Two years ago, it was Norfolk Southern and CSX that jointly stated to the Surface Transportation Board that the Conrail split-up would take 1 million trucks off the road in 3 years. If this were to become a reality this would definitely provide a positive vision for the future in terms of removing pollutants from our atmosphere.

One of my duties is the Department of Defense and Navy Regional Environmental Coordinator, for EPA Region III and when I heard those numbers I was impressed. They certainly give us good reason to research the possibilities. The bottom line is that there are minimal environmental negatives associated with use of rail and the possibility of getting more single occupancy vehicles and trucks off the road is a big positive.

Additionally, fewer cars going through our gates helps us with our security posture as well.

As a final piece of background information, the ever-expanding role in worldwide operations coupled with increasing budgetary constraints are realities the military faces daily. Never has getting the material or personnel to the right place, at the right time, at the right price been more important. Personnel must arrive at their appointed place of duty as expected and cargo shipments must arrive on time. President Bush notes, the war we fight today against terrorism is a different kind of war. Speed, flexibility, and precision are paramount to successful military operations. Lives are at stake. Getting material or personnel to a Navy ship is not routine. Ships and squadrons are constantly moving ... people and cargo must follow.

I'd like to share ideas on how rail capabilities can integrate with Navy needs.

Passengers.

This may be the most valuable use of rail in the near term for military use. The Hampton Roads to Washington route is the

number one Navy passenger travel corridor. More personnel travel this lane annually than any other Navy origin and destination pair. With over 250,000 military personnel in the Hampton Roads area, an estimated 36,000 Department of Defense passengers travel this route. About 75 percent of them travel solo in privately owned vehicles. Potentially, there are 27,000 opportunities to get cars off this corridor with rail.

This is where I see high speed rail playing an active role. With the time it currently takes to get to the airport, go through the new FAA security checks, fly to D.C. and get to the final destination, high speed rail is competitive, if not superior, to air transport in terms of time. We saw on the South East High Speed Rail web site, the goal of charging passengers 20 cents per mile for a high-speed rail ticket. The cost of a round trip rail ticket from Hampton Roads to Washington DC would be about $100. A search of best fares from the travel web sites yesterday revealed a best airfare at $364.00! From a cost perspective, high speed rail would be more competitive than air travel. High speed rail brings advantages to the Hampton Roads military.

It is conceivable that military unit movements could arrive in Hampton Roads from origins such as Quantico, Fort Lee (Richmond) or Fort A. P. Hill (Fredericksburg) on their way to any number of worldwide destinations. Operation Enduring Freedom has demonstrated the Norfolk Navy Air Terminal's strategic location for personnel deployments. So far, 149 units have used Norfolk as the port of embarkation into Southwest Asia. High-speed rail could get those soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines to Norfolk much more quickly and comfortably than buses. When the military moves, it can move great quantities of personnel on a short-notice basis. Consequently, the idea of 2,000+ passengers descending suddenly on a rail traffic lane is of concern to AMTRAK. This has caused the Government's overarching transportation regulation to direct air transport as the preferred transportation mode, a notion that could be easily changed if rail could offer a better solution, a solution such as high-speed rail.

We inaugurated a new air passenger terminal at Naval Station Norfolk with commercial airport standards. We see over 110,000 passengers arriving and departing annually through this passenger terminal. Roughly 40 percent are coming and going to locations outside the Hampton Roads area. We currently transport these passengers to Norfolk International Airport for follow-on flights.

Here again is an untapped market for high speed and light rail as these people could use this combination of rail capabilities to reach their final destinations.

Cargo.

Rail is not a transportation mode often associated with Navy transportation in the current environment. Today, trucks haul virtually all of our cargo and mail.

Hampton Roads possesses service from both Norfolk Southern and CSX. This service is high usage and has a well-maintained right-of-way. We are confident that any commodity or equipment can easily be handled. Historically, we've seen the railroads support the nation in a time of crisis. During Desert Storm, the U.S. Army deployed through Newport News and Norfolk via rail to ocean going vessels. **In total, 6,701 pieces of rolling stock (233,000 measurement tons) transited through the Norfolk and Newport News ports. Primarily from the Peninsula. Placed bumper to bumper, that line of vehicles would stretch over 19 miles or the distance from downtown Williamsburg to the Ft Eustis Front Gate.) In this environment,** the railroads proved to be an

outstanding method to transport heavy U. S. Army mechanized divisions moving great tonnages over long distances. There was no doubt that a rail deployment was efficient and effective with those type commodities and over those long distances. This holds true today when we deploy combat units through a seaport. Norfolk and Newport News still play a prominent role in war planning as sealift embarkation points.

Railroads can be envisioned as an indispensable asset relative to disaster contingencies where other modes of transportation are severely challenged. For example, if you review the plans to evacuate Hampton Roads you may become very concerned. You might ask yourself, "How can our highway system handle the surge of vehicular traffic from the 1.5 million people on short notice?" Many of you can recall the Florida and South Carolina experiences with interstate congestion from hurricane evacuations. Were there a hurricane in the this region V-Dot would have to reverse I-64 into one direction during the evacuation and limiting access back into the effected area is a reality.

These images impact our ability to get critical cargo and relief supplies into Hampton Roads. The supply lines need to remain intact to military and relief efforts during disasters. Railroads present an OUTSTANDING alternative to maintain transportation connectivity.

Not much stops the railroads. I remember back on January 3rd of this year the snow storm that hit Hampton Roads. About 8-10 inches of snow conspired to clog our interstates and highways. Traffic was a nightmare. The trains were running as scheduled.

The Navy is currently designing an intermodal hub for cargo. This is a plan to merge our air terminal operation and ocean terminal operation under one roof. Aside from a host of facilities advantages, we see logistic benefits ranging from better traffic management decisions between surface and air modes. This also means more agile reactions to changing war fighter demands and increased flexibility in successfully delivering material to a ship moving quickly between ports and with a very narrow availability window for delivery.

There is certainly an opportunity for **rail to integrate into the intermodal hub.** The Norfolk Southern tracks are just on the opposite side of I-564, less the 1/10th of a mile from the proposed intermodal hub site.

We also know the railroads are also thinking intermodally. While the concepts of double stacks and trailer-on-flat-car are now standards, there is a resurgence of the Roadrailer concept, especially AMTRAK's express service and Norfolk Southern's Triple Crown Service and there appears to be an opportunity in that concept to provide service to the military. Truck trailers that can ride the rails and potentially ride in trains mixed with standard rail cars. That gets railroads a step closer to providing a service beneficial to the Navy.

The Navy currently is a heavy user of trucks because of the characteristics trucks bring to the transportation venue, in order for the Navy to use rail more frequently, rail must to be competitive in the following characteristics.

1. Speed. Time is often critical. Lack of a spare part may be keeping an F-18 or S-3 on the flight deck or keep a ship incapacitated at pier side.

2. Reliability. We have to know the material is coming. But when is it arriving? Dependability is a key logistics element during war. This is especially important as delays in the process result in compounding delays down the supply chain line.

3. Time Definite Delivery. Shipments must arrive for further transport at the designated time. Synchronization is another key when integrating multiple transportation modes for military cargo deliveries. Windows of opportunity are often limited.

4. Cost. Funding is constrained. About 12 cents a pound currently buys short-haul trucking services.

We use the term “readiness” to describe our military’s ability to support missions and protect U.S. interests at home and overseas. These four transportation elements define our readiness posture. While rail transportation does not currently accomplish these elements as it moves toward this goal, there continue to be more and more opportunities to work with the Navy.

The future looks bright for Hampton Roads. It is expected that 9,000 new jobs will be generated this year. Additionally, the private sector is expected to add over 5,000 jobs outside of the military influence. Tourism is expected to increase again this year in spite of the events of September 11th. As Hampton Road grows, so will our military presence, not just from service members but from their families, civil servants, and contractors that complement our military members. As Hampton Roads grows, so does its road congestion and the urgency of getting cars and trucks off the road. The need for transportation solutions both in and out of Hampton Roads is here. Hampton Roads is ready for an exciting revolution in transportation. There is great potential for high speed rail passenger traffic with the opportunity for freight transport via railroads. Rail is a positive vision for the Hampton Roads community and for the military.